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**U.S. SEEKS TO INTERVENE AND SUE RHINEBECK SCHOOL DISTRICT
FOR FAILING TO STOP SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS**

DAVID N. KELLEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced today that the federal Government filed a motion to intervene and a Complaint under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 against Rhinebeck Central School District in Rhinebeck, Dutchess County, New York (the "District"), alleging that the District failed to take appropriate action in response to repeated reports that the principal of Rhinebeck High School ("High School"), Thomas Mawhinney, was sexually harassing a large number of female students over an extended period of time.

The Complaint alleges that during the 10 years in which Mawhinney presided over the High School he subjected female students to sexual harassment that was severe, pervasive and objectively offensive. The Government further alleges that his behavior with respect to the female students created a hostile educational environment and constituted discrimination on the basis of sex.

In addition, the Government alleges that District officials knew about the incidents in which Mawhinney sexually harassed the students but were deliberately indifferent to the reports of the harassment. The Government alleges that the District's deliberate indifference prevented female students at the High School from enjoying the educational benefits and opportunities provided by the District.

The Government's Complaint seeks, among other things, an order requiring the District to develop, adopt, and timely implement a comprehensive plan that will ensure a discrimination-free educational environment for all of its students. The Complaint also seeks unspecified damages to compensate the student victims.

The Government filed its Complaint in connection with a private lawsuit previously brought against the District and Mawhinney in the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York by four current and former students of the High School. The Government is seeking the Court's permission to intervene as a plaintiff in that private lawsuit to assert its claims against the District. The private lawsuit is assigned to United States District Judge STEPHEN C. ROBINSON.

Mr. KELLEY stated: "All students have the right to an educational environment free from sexual harassment. When school districts learn about the sexual harassment of students, the law requires that they take effective action to stop the harassment

from continuing."

Assistant United States Attorney HEIDI A. WENDEL is in charge of the case.

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